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PROGRAMME, THE ENVIRONMENT FUND AND ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER BUDGETARY MATTERS

Functioning of the specialized offices of the United Nations Environment Programme

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

In response to Governing Council decision SS.V/1 of 22 May 1998, this report provides information on UNEP's specialized offices, namely the Industry and Environment Programme Activity Centre (IE/PAC) in Paris, and the International Environment Technology Centre (IETC) in Osaka and Shiga, Japan. 1/

Suggested action by the Governing Council

The Governing Council may wish:

1. To note the report of the Executive Director;

2. To endorse the steps taken by the Executive Director to bring greater efficiency through synergies between the main units in the United Nations Environment Programme addressing technology transfer, environmental issues related to industrial and urban activities (and in particular production and use of chemicals), as well as of energy, and the related key economic and trade aspects.

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* UNEP/GC.20/1.

1/ Effective 1 January 1999, the functions of these offices will be carried out by the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics.

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I. INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME ACTIVITY CENTRE

1. The Industry and Environment Office (IEO), located in Paris, was established in 1975, three years after the creation of UNEP itself. Its objective was to integrate environmental criteria into industrial development. At that time, IEO was totally funded from the Environment Fund. In 1991, the Governing Council, in its decision 16/25 of 31 May 1991, decided to give IEO the status of a programme activity centre (PAC) allowing for greater autonomy in administration and financial management. The Governing Council also requested the Executive Director to accelerate the development of IE/PAC and its network to help promote a global exchange of environmentally sound technologies.

2. In 1994, IE/PAC was also designated to perform a "clearing-house" function under the Montreal Protocol. The same year, IE/PAC was also made responsible for energy and environment issues in co-operation with the Riso Collaborating Centre in Denmark. The establishment of a number of Industry Officers in various regional offices has ensured regional delivery of IE/PAC activities.

3. Since 1991, funding for IE/PAC has come from three different sources: the Environment Fund, the Multilateral Fund of the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and counterpart contributions, in particular from France.

4. The initial focus of IE/PAC emphasized pollution control and resulted in a number of sectoral guidelines, as well as the quarterly review Industry and Environment. Those publications, together with the organization of a number of workshops and seminars, contributed to awareness-raising and initial capacity-building to address existing pollution problems.

5. With the increase in demand from developing countries for support to address the industry and environment problems they faced, combined with the realization that it is more cost-efficient to prevent than to cure, IE/PAC selected its priorities on the basis of the following criteria:

(a) Prevention, rather than repair, of environmental damage;

(b) Focus on sectors with major environmental impacts or emerging pollution problems;

(c) Leverage actions that stimulate greater activity from others;

(d) Support for the implementation of international environmental conventions; and

(e) Support for other UNEP activities.

6. The general approach used by IE/PAC was to:

(a) Define the concepts, policies and tools that would lead to sustainable production and consumption;

(b) Create widespread awareness of these concepts, policies and tools;

(c) Help build up capabilities for implementing them;

(d) Demonstrate their effectiveness; and

(e) Monitor results and achievements regularly.

7. This strategy led to the following priority activities:

(a) Development of the cleaner production programme as well as the awareness and preparedness for emergencies at local level (APELL) programme, both of which are reviewed biennially at high level conferences;

(b) Promotion of the development and use of voluntary initiatives and codes of conduct;

(c) Publication of 40 technical guides in the technical report series, 17 training manuals, equivalent number of case-study booklets, and additional relevant publications totalling over 250, which are generally sold, but remain free-of-charge for developing countries;

(d) Creation of a Web-site with interactive components;

(e) Organization of numerous awareness-raising and capacity-building workshops and seminars worldwide;

(f) Implementation of networks and working groups in key industry sectors such as textile, metal finishing, agro-industry, pulp and paper, oil exploration and exploitation, mining, and tourism; and

(g) Launching of a number of demonstration projects in numerous countries.

8. IE/PAC addressed technology transfer issues in a number of ways:

(a) Development of information exchange systems on technologies and policies (the International Cleaner Production Information Clearing-house and the OzonAction Information Clearing-house);

(b) Supporting the establishment and use of environmental management systems and tools such as auditing, reporting, environmental technology assessment;

(c) Institution-building in developing countries (e.g. the establishment of the National Cleaner Production Centre, in cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization), facilitation of regional networks of Ozone Officers;

(d) Education and training and capacity-building; and

(e) Initiation of a consultative mechanism between providers and users of information on environmentally sound technologies, in cooperation with the International Environmental Technology Centre (Japan) and as an input to the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

9. IE/PAC has always adopted a collaborative approach based on a broad participation of industry and government specialists as well as non-governmental organizations. In 1984, IEO and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) organized the first World Industry Conference on Environmental Management (WICEM). Every year, IE/PAC organizes consultative meetings consistently attended by more than 40 industry associations from all parts of the world, with a view to exchanging information, developing partnerships, and assessing industry's progress in implementing Agenda 21. Co-operation with other United Nations partners, in particular the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization, United Nations Development Programme, and the World Health Organization, has been also increasing.

II. INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

10. The International Environmental Technology Centre, located in Osaka and Shiga, Japan, was established in 1991 pursuant to Governing Council decision 16/34 of 31 May 1991, following an offer and financial support of the Government of Japan. Its mandate is to promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs), with a special focus on environmentally sustainable management of big cities and fresh-water lake/reservoir basins. IETC was officially inaugurated in 1994. It is funded primarily by a trust fund, to which Japan is currently the only contributor, and by the Environment Fund. The Centre is supported by two foundations, the Global Environment Centre Foundation (GEC) in Osaka and the International Lake Environment Committee (ILEC) in Shiga.

11. During its four years of effective operation, the IETC has developed activities with the following objectives:

(a) Improved access of information on environmentally sound technologies to help decision makers in developing countries and countries with economies in transition make informed choices. The information is provided in the form of a directory with relevant information, case-studies, periodical publications and reports in both electronic format, including the Internet, and hard copy. Publications focused on: sustainable management of urban waste water and stormwater, water leakage prevention in urban water supply systems; air quality management; and management of lakes and reservoirs to address eutrophication;

(b) Enhancing technology cooperation and transfer, with the development of maESTro, a technology database containing 1000 entries, and accessible through the Internet. Demonstration activities in Poland, the Philippines, and in the Mekong River have also taken place; and

(c) Increasing capacity-building for urban management and environmental technology assessment with a series of workshops and seminars in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

12. IETC has adopted a collaborative approach with other partners and United Nations agencies and in particular the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat) (Sustainable Cities Programme) and the United Nations University (UNU).

III. BRINGING SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE UNEP OUT-POSTED CENTRES AND UNITS

13. IE/PAC and IETC have cooperated in a number of activities, in particular on the inventory of sources of information of environmentally sound technologies, the consultative process between users and providers of information of environmentally sound technologies (undertaken for the CSD), the development of a UNEP Environmental Technology Assessment activity, and a number of joint workshops.

14. Given the above, the following conclusions may be drawn:

(a) After 23 years of operation, IE/PAC has established and enhanced UNEP's solid reputation and credibility in the field. Its leadership role to raise awareness, build capacities, facilitate exchange of information on cleaner and safer technologies in the various industrial sectors and in support of the Montreal Protocol and other conventions, as well as contribute to the technology transfer issue, is well established;

(b) However, as reflected in the CSD discussions and decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development during the last two years, needs still remain very high. In all industrial sectors, there is a need for technology innovation, improved knowledge-sharing, and technology management. In addition, as was clearly highlighted in the UNDP Human Development Report 1998, while industry has to use cleaner and safer processes and practices, and supply cleaner and safer products, there is also a need to increase the demand of such products by consumers as well as Governments and industry through their own purchasing practices;

(c) After only four years of operation, IETC has already achieved significant results in improving access to information on environmentally sound technologies and building capacities, particularly in the field of urban and water management. With the rapidly growing urbanization, the need to improve environmental management of cities, and to develop the corresponding technology cooperation, is stronger than ever. Similarly, the shortage of freshwater, as well as its increasing contamination, call for improved management tools and technologies, and related capacity-building. IETC is uniquely placed to respond to these needs, enhance overall recognition of those issues and enlarge the image of UNEP in this field.

15. In 1991, the Governing Council highlighted the necessity of coordinating the activities of IETC and IE/PAC, with each centre addressing the issue of environmentally-sound-technology transfer in its respective field of activity.

16. Recently, the need for building ynergies between the two centres and other UNEP units under one umbrella has become apparent. Economic instruments stimulate the promotion of technology development and transfer. Chemicals issues, including chemical production and use, have to be addressed by industry managers and local authorities as well as by Governments. The work undertaken by UNEP in the field of chemicals can benefit from the lessons learned from the OzonAction programme, which aims at phasing out the use of a specific family of chemicals, ozone-depleting substances (ODS). Such need for synergies is addressed by the new organizational structure of UNEP.